

THE LABOUR ORGANISER

No. 42

MAY, 1924

Price 4d.

OUT OF THE RUT

IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES IN BRIEF

We have on one or two occasions referred to the great efforts being made in the Spen Valley Division towards the three days bazaar, from which so much was hoped. These efforts came to fruition on Saturday, 26th April and the following Monday and Tuesday, when the bazaar duly took place. From the reports to hand we gather that the event proved a great triumph for the Spen Valley D.L.P., and not the least for their energetic agent, Councillor J. S. Bryan, who we note with pleasure has now been appointed full time. The decorative scheme adopted was an excellent representation of an Olde English Village, and the idea was prettily carried out by Messrs. Womersley of Leeds. Our readers will be principally interested in the financial success of the bazaar, and we may convey this in a sentence by saying that it was announced that the total takings had reached £2,127 10s. 1d.!

Numerically the above Bazaar must have proved a "stunner." There were long queues at the opening, and so overtaxed did the hall finally become that overflow rooms had to be engaged within a few hours and these were used principally for refreshments. Some amusing statistics are to hand concerning the latter department, from which we gather that in three days 148 two-gallons urns of tea were made, which, on a rough calculation of one pint per person gives us 2,368 customers at the teacup department; besides this 62 dozen bottles of mineral waters were consumed, and seven or eight gallons of ice-cream. Bazaaring is obviously a hot and thirsty affair.

The Hartlepool Labour Party were responsible for a bazaar and carnival held on 23rd April, a report of which is not yet to hand. A somewhat striking handbook has, however, reached us from which we gather that the stalls were to be named in what we may well regard as an ultra-modern manner, for surely, the latest in stall nomenclature is to name them after a Labour Govern-

ment. Thus we note that there was a "Prime Minister's Stall," a "Lord Privy Seal's Stall," a "Colonial Secretary's Stall," a "Home Secretary's Stall," and so forth; not that they sold young Prime Ministers or budding Home Secretaries at the stalls named after them, for the Prime Minister's stall sold Needlework and the "Daintiest Underwear"! That a humorist had done this thing was very obvious for a tag announced that this was a labour of love! The Rt. Hon. J. R. Clynes' stall (Lord Privy Seal's stall) sold "Peas, Beans and Barley O! Rice, Sugar and Jam O!"—which was somewhat reminiscent of a former Food Controller. Mr. J. H. Thomas's stall sold "White Elephants," which leaves one guessing. Some stalls were appropriate and some were not, but anyway the idea was new and the curiosity was there. We hope success also attended.

We are glad to note that individual membership is booming at Stafford so much so that a part-time collector has been appointed for the collection of contributions.

The London Labour Choral Union has now been definitely established, and rehearsals are in full swing. The object of the Union is "to develop the musical instincts of the people and to render service to the Labour Movement of the Metropolis."

The report of the London District of Agents was a very encouraging document. The membership stood at 50—42 full-time and eight part-time members, as against a total of 42 at the beginning of the year.

The following officers were elected: Chairman, Mr. W. S. Rainbird (East Ham); Vice-Chairman, Mr. W. H. Jacob (Walthamstow); Secretary, Alderman R. Montford, J.P. (Islington); Treasurer, Mr. R. T. Windle (London Organiser); Auditor, Mr. A. E. Nunn (Willesden).

We have to record the appearance of two new local Labour publications: Number 1 of the "Cleveland Messenger" is to hand, and is apparently a little propaganda sheet, which is intended to place the Party's activities and ideas before the public of the Cleveland Division. It claims to be a small paper with a big message, and the first number is interesting, containing as it does a forceful article by the Labour candidate, Mrs. Coates Hansen, on "What has the Labour Government done?" The "Dawn" is the title of a little monthly on somewhat larger lines, Number 1 of which has reached us from the Frome Division. The opportunity is here for a first-class local monthly and this first number shapes very well.

A circular both in English and Welsh has reached us under the hand of Mr. T. C. Morris, the National Organiser for Wales and Monmouthshire, and from the English version of this we gather that considerable energy is to be put into propaganda and organisation in Wales during the summer. An attempt is being made to compile a list of available speakers and to cope with the difficulties which have arisen in so many places through shortages of speakers owing to the Parliamentary situation and Labour's successes at the polls.

The "Labour Woman" for May is the first of a permanently enlarged issue and in its new form appears with an attractive cover drawing. It is gratifying to record that there has been a considerable increase in circulation, showing that the Movement appreciates this special paper for women with its special outlook and interesting articles and news.

The Labour Party leaflet, "Labour's Month of Office," has now been reprinted under a new heading, giving a wider scope and record of the Government's accomplishments. The perforation of the tear-off has also been improved, and in its new form the leaflet should have a very good run at public meetings.

At the Women's Conference to be held in London on the 13th and 14th inst., the question of a national Labour Party colour is again being ventilated.

A resolution urges that universal red should be the Party colour, while an amendment from three sources advocates red and yellow. Why not red and gold which surely is more emblematic of worth?

The Party badge advertised on another page in this issue is, we understand, catching on and a phenomenal demand is expected. Local Parties who wish to make money should order a good supply at once and have the badges on sale at all meetings. While there are so many thousands of members to be supplied it would temporarily be a good thing for Local Parties to appoint a special badge secretary to cope with the demand; this officer could arrange various details of supply and sales without throwing the extra work on the present secretary. There is nothing short of a boom in the badges in certain places, and if the sales reach the proportions which present indications give, not only will Local Parties materially benefit, but the national fighting fund will also receive a welcome impetus.

Volume III.

(1923) OF

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SOME REPORTS AND BALANCE SHEETS

The annual report of the Woolwich Labour Party now to hand is an encouraging document. At the end of December last after clearing the books of all lapsed members the membership stood at 3,040 paying individual members. During the first quarter of 1924 there has been a further increase, the membership in April actually standing at 3,453. But the Woolwich Labour Party is not yet satisfied, and are apparently continuing to press forward their membership campaign with all the vigour possible.

Financially, the year under notice has been a good one for the Woolwich Labour Party, who are to be profoundly congratulated on their achievements. Saddled with a great burden of financial liability left by the former weekly "Pioneer," Party management has called for business qualities of a high order. The year was begun with liabilities amounting to £2,691, which during the twelve months have been reduced to £1,554. Thus in a year, during which the Party spent £1,120 on elections, and carried on its other work, debts are reduced by no less than £1,137!

One of the events of the year was the "Merrie England" Bazaar, from which the Party funds benefitted to the tune of £570. An interesting item for other Labour promoters of bazaars is the fact that out of £730 taken by the bazaar stalls, £473 were sales on coupons presented. This prior sale of coupons presents a means by which preliminary expenditure on materials and preparations may be largely met, or even a "sub" on proceeds secured. Councillor W. Barefoot, the Secretary of the Woolwich Labour Party and Miss Mabel Crout, Assistant Secretary, are to be heartily congratulated on another year's great service to the Party.

From an almost precisely opposite type of constituency we get the report of the Frome D.L.P. Here a General Election victory has lit up the West Country and stirred the enthusiasm of many supporters in a notoriously difficult province. The Frome report is interesting in its get-up which is

cheap yet handy. Perhaps some inkling as to the reason of last December's victory may be gathered from the fact that no less than 28 Local Labour Parties in the Division contributed their share to the general fund.

The Reading Labour Party report covers a year begun with much mis-giving and discouragement, but which finished up with a great Parliamentary victory and a satisfactory account. The publication of the Reading "Citizen" was also begun during the year, a useful little four-page monthly of which no less than 60,000 copies have been distributed. We are glad to know that the individual membership has been more than doubled and that ward organisation has proved of exceeding value. The financial statement shows that a bazaar profit of £128 was a timely aid which saved the Party from difficulties. We note that besides this item £164 has been received from social gatherings, and £108 from competitions, apart from other income devoted to the Parliamentary Fund. In the Political Fund contributions which, we presume, are mainly composed of individual payments totalled the sum of £98 11s. 1d. Congratulations must be extended to Mr. A. Lockwood, the agent, whose excellent work has obviously been making itself felt.

The report of the Gravesend D.L.P., which is accompanied by a very clear and detailed statement of a number of funds which reflect the activity of the Party is, however, interesting, because it is among the minority which give a few detailed words of report concerning each Local Party or subsidiary body—a policy which we have repeatedly advocated. We note that there has been a steady increase in individual membership, the membership for the year being up by over 500. Individual members' contributions have increased by £26 5s. 2d. There has also been considerable intensive polling district organisation, and the great improvement in this direction would undoubtedly have principally accounted for the victory at the General Election, when Mr. G. A. Isaacs, M.P., captured the seat by a small majority. If this sort of work goes on Gravesend should, on the next occasion, become a safe Labour seat.

One of the most interesting features about the report of the Skipton D.L.P., who operate in a typically difficult and scattered county division, is the record of financial success, which has enabled them to fight two elections in a little over 12 months, and to maintain an organiser and fighting organisation in the interim, coming out of this ordeal with a balance on the right side. Skipton Division is not an easy proposition, and the work of the Party there guided by the able and energetic organiser, Mr. Hinley Atkinson, refutes the pessimism of those in similar divisions, who sometimes deplore the necessity of finding even the few pounds necessary for regular meetings of their own executive, and who for ever are looking up at the heavens for a windfall that will set them on their feet.

In four months the election expenses of £671 6s. 6d. incurred during the last election were met and a balance of £20 odd placed to the credit of the next fight. In addition to this the income to the general fund for the whole year was £465 3s. 5d., leaving a balance in hand of £19.

ANOTHER REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE

R.P. 122 and R.P. 123.

An Order in Counsel has recently been made amending No. 1813 of Statutory Rules and Orders 1918, which was an Order made in pursuance of Section 13 of the Representation of the People's Act, and amongst other things laid down the forms and procedure for the registration of Naval and Military voters. The above-named amended Order is cited as S.R. & O. 1924, No. 337, and is reprinted as an R.P. leaflet No. 122 (price one penny). Accompanying the circulation of the Order to registration officers was an explanatory circular from the Home office, of which the reference number is 419376/93, and which is also published as an R.P. leaflet (R.P. 123).

The amending Order simplifies the past procedure by which Naval and Military voters were put upon the register. At the recent General Election a number of defects became apparent. Ballot papers were not received in a considerable number of cases where men would be entitled to them, because

the Naval authorities had not recorded the men's registration. In other cases where the Naval authorities furnished a man's location it was found that the names were no longer on the register, having been omitted in accordance with information received to the effect that relatives had ceased to reside at the man's qualifying addresses. Altogether the procedure was unsatisfactory; some men were found to be on for two qualifying addresses either in the same or different constituencies.

It is pointed out that the above discrepancies largely arose through the operation, and we suppose contradictions, of the two methods of registration, i.e., that of a man's own declaration, and secondly that of information obtained by canvass. Steps have been taken in the past to minimise the risks inherent in this dual system, but in view of the failure of such efforts it has been decided to reduce the whole procedure to a uniform basis.

In future no person is to be registered as a Naval or Military voter under Section 5 of the R.P. Act except through his own statement. It is provided that where upon information received from the relatives on canvass or otherwise it appears to the registration officer that any person serving in H.M. Forces is qualified to be registered as an N. or M. voter, the registration officer shall not on that information alone include the name in the electors' list, but he shall send a notice to the man requiring a statement in the prescribed form.

If, on receipt of the notice the man decided to fill in a statement of qualification for the new address he will at the same time be required to make a declaration (as part of the statement), either that he is not already registered as a Naval or Military voter, or, if he is already registered in that capacity for another qualifying address, that he wishes no longer to remain on the register for that address. Such a declaration will be essential in all cases, whether of new registrations or of changes of registration.

Various details follow by which the registration officer is instructed as to steps he shall take to deal further with the statement and declaration. The Order in Council with the explanatory circular should be consulted by registration agents who deal with Naval or Military claims or objections.

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THE SECRETARY'S PAGE

Examining the balance sheets of a large number of Local Labour Parties this year we have been struck by the absence on the income side in actually a majority of cases of any mention of literature sales. This criticism applies generally to almost every kind of Party and even where an income is shown in few cases does it attain to respectable figures. We are able to understand this deficiency in the case of Divisional Labour Parties in county constituencies where the work partakes more of a co-ordinating character than of the intensive nature undertaken by the more local organisations. Even in this case, however, it is difficult to account for no sales whatever. We strongly advise secretaries to take some steps to remedy this deficiency during the coming year. The output of Labour Party literature is simply not known or sold as it should be. There is real need for revived effort in this direction as our enemies are hard on the track in circulating literature to the electorate. A well-conducted literature department should bring grist to the mill and return a profit. The real backbone of the Labour Movement is its extraordinary proportion of people who have been converted to its teachings out of pure reason. The appeal to reason is essentially a Labour appeal, and the printed word usually conveys more fact and argument than platform eloquence ever imparts.

An examination of balance sheets also shows that there is still, in many places, a great neglect of opportunity with individual membership. We mention in another page a Party with well over 3,000 individual members and we know a number whose membership runs into four figures. But in lots of cases spasmodic efforts only are made and the total never reaches more than a few hundreds. There is vast room for improvement and a vast field to explore. Between now and the end of the year abundant opportunities occur for consistent plans and campaigns with a view to further strengthening the numbers of every Party. It should be remembered that small numbers actually do not pay. They are a loss, but large numbers mean a respectable income and usually a large accession of fresh blood and workers.

There is a recent tendency among some Parties with heavy financial responsibilities to look to big enterprises alone for the purpose of providing the sinews of war. We would encourage such big efforts in every way, but the mistake must not be permitted of allowing all the energies of the Party to be absorbed in one direction, and that not always a genuinely organising or propagandist direction. Let us get on by all means with the big schemes for raising money, but at the same time let us not forget that members must be enrolled and subscriptions collected, or that literature sales ought to be at work and pamphlets sold. Fortunately, some Local Parties do these things with an admirable sense of proportion, and one could point to instances where not only are big things accomplished and big funds raised, but the whole work of propaganda and organisation goes steadily on and dovetails with it.

We recently came across a Labour secretary who, during the past four years has attended over 300 Trades Union branch meetings for and on behalf of his Local Labour Party. A revival of this form of Local Labour activity is to be desired, for there seems to have been some slacking of it during the last year or two. At any rate deputising the Trades Union branches was much more common three or four years ago, when, throughout the country Local Labour Parties were establishing themselves and seeking affiliations for the first time. That deputising the branches pays can be clearly proved from the instance we have given where Labour organisation is in a singularly healthy condition despite extreme industrial depression. In the case mentioned the Local Party are well represented on the local Council and they have captured the Parliamentary seat.

We hear that a Ward Secretaries' Committee has been formed in Derby. Perhaps most secretaries will fight shy of further organisations or further meetings, but the idea seems a good one and suitable for adoption in places with many wards or polling districts. The ward secretaries, if they are of the real live stuff, have a certain definite common interest, and one can well imagine that meetings for mutual consultation and discussion on ward business could be very helpful and effective.

LET LABOUR HELP !

WE have now entered upon an interesting period in Parliamentary history. Labour has now been called upon to form a government, and to prove to the doubting parties that Labour CAN govern. At a time such as this, it behoves the Labour Party to use publicity to the fullest extent.

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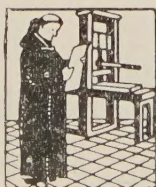
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W. W. BORRETT,
Manager

SOME LESSONS OF THE GENERAL ELECTION.

By THE EDITOR.
ARTICLE III.

From sub-agents we turn to personation agents, and here I must confess to having been materially influenced as to the advisability of the employment of these officers by the atmosphere of suspicion which has surrounded many recent elections.

There is no doubt about it that the present method of conducting the ballot, in spite of the intention of the authors of the Ballot Act does afford plenty of loophole for misconduct and trickery. The fact that the ballot papers and ballot boxes may be for long hours in the sole custody of two or even one opponent, with possibly a good knowledge of who will vote and who will not, is of itself not a circumstance to inspire one with confidence. The open voting of the blind is again open to abuse. But the commonest fault seems to be the wrongful presence of "fetchers-up" and others in the polling booth, while votes are being cast, and the non-secrecy of voting under such circumstances amounting almost to intimidation in many places. Compartments are generally *not* secret, and the presence of unauthorised people or the interference of those entitled to be present with others who are voting is a common occurrence, which, failing the willingness of the presiding officer to prevent, could only be stopped by the presence of a personation agent, ready to take objection.

That personation on a large scale takes place in any part of the country is very doubtful, and the real value of personation agents is in the directions just indicated. There are, however, places where isolated acts of personation may not be infrequent, and it is probable that the appointment of agents keeps this offence in check. Anyway, in places where personation has been known to take place in the past, I do not advise election agents to enter into a compact not to appoint agents. It may even be worth while to appoint them, and swear them in, even if they are only to be used for a few hours.

Coming to election finances, the late election found the Labour Party financially unready, and probably a larger number of election agents than ever before found themselves with the added

embarrassment of having to find the resources while fighting the election. In spite of this fact we came out of the ordeal better than ever, and though at first sight the agent without this worry would seem to be better off, I am convinced that the endeavour to raise, at any rate, some portion of the funds, during the contest, does actually invigorate the fight and benefit the result. Even if a definite amount is found on which the election is to be fought the opening of a supplementary fund gives the opportunity to enthusiasts to come along, and the enthusiasm of a man who has made a sacrifice very often resolves itself into magnificent service. It was noteworthy that in many places where quite a large sum had to be raised workers came forward in surprising numbers with an added interest, because they had directly paid something to the fight. I have long come to the conclusion that collections at election meetings do not hamper the contest, but in fact advantage it.

On this question of finance one of the greatest mistakes that is made is to generalise over the amount which can or ought to be spent. When either an individual or an organisation seeks to lay down a flat rate which should be spent in any or every type of constituency, they simply display their ignorance of the conditions of modern electioneering. One might perhaps easily say what is the maximum one can *afford* to spend, but all sorts of conditions and contingencies enter into a consideration of what it is *wise* to spend, or *ought* to be spent. Constituencies widely differ in their nature and characteristics. Even candidates themselves provide a variation of what is necessary, for an unknown candidate obviously requires more advertisement than a man whose very name carries weight and votes throughout the constituency. Electorates differ in size, distribution and impressibility; local organisations vary in influence, knowledge and adaptability; initial work, and organisation, and resources vary in kind and quality; and not least, or last, the *nature* of the fight one is to put up dictates the size of the effort and the cost of same. Even where the resources of a contest have to be hurriedly scratched together, it should not, in my opinion, be a case of fighting on what one can get, as of deciding on an appropriate figure, and going out to get it.

The election accounts still present a good deal of difficulty to inexperienced agents, and, perhaps, sometimes also to those who have done the thing before. Before the next election we shall give in the "Labour Organiser" some illustrations and guidance on this question for it certainly seems to be needed, but in the meantime it is well to say that many of the difficulties appear to arise because of the wrong impression that making up the return necessarily means a recasting of the election accounts and a sort of filling-in process accompanied, may I suggest, with some degree of pruning. The actual return should be not more than a certified copy of the accounts as they have been entered day by day. The utmost that is necessary is a placing together of payments belonging to the same person. Questions of analysis should be decided as expenses are paid and not left for decision afterwards. I have heard it argued that this cannot be done, which means that the rendering of accounts truthfully according to Act of Parliament is an impossibility. I do not share this view.

One word before I finish on the question of women's work. The last

election was the third General Election in which women had votes, and on this last occasion a record number of women workers came in in practically all constituencies. This is a sign of the times and election agents must sit up and take notice. Not only must there be more provision for an intensification of women's special activities, but the door must be thrown more widely open so that women shall share the other burdens of the fight with men. On platform and committee, in short, all along the line, there must be this adaptation to modern conditions, and it is only in this way that we shall reap the full fruits of that wide extension of the franchise which brought in women.

There may be other lessons, but for my purpose the final one shall be that the Movement in 1923 proved to doubters that it could fight as valiantly when the challenge came without warning as it had fought 12 months before after four years of alarm. So long as the Movement remains willing to fight and able to fight it will remain a living force—and a winning one.

(The above article is based on an address given by the Editor of the "Labour Organiser" to a meeting of agents.)

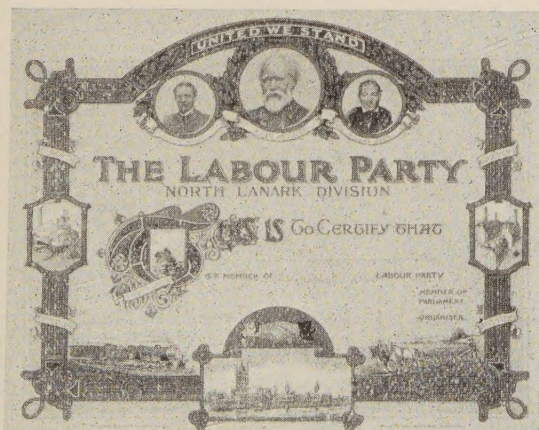
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MAPS AND ELECTIONS.

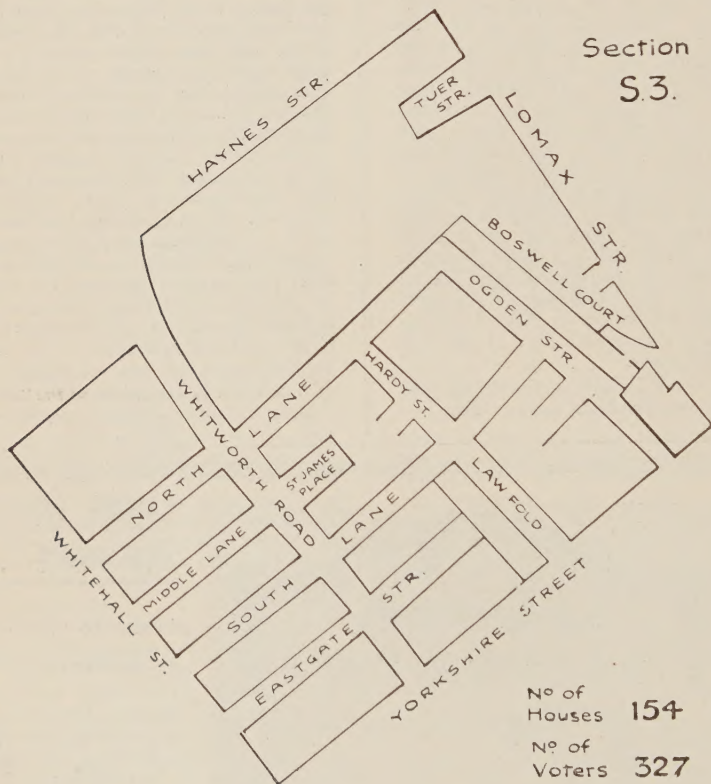
By E. J. ALFORD (Rochdale)

The use of maps in electioneering has not received the attention it deserves, especially in view of the fact that maps, eminently suitable for the purpose, are so easily available, and so moderate in price. The distribution of literature, the essential registration work, and the all-important arrangements for

boroughs, but a 6-inch of the whole area should also be on the walls of every agent's office, showing the ward boundaries and all the polling stations.

At one time, a map of the borough was sufficient for all practical purposes, but the broadening of the franchise forced the authorities to divide boroughs into wards, and later, wards into polling districts.

The 1918 Representation of the



canvassing, can be immensely helped by the judicious use of maps.

The illustration shows an average section in a fairly densely populated area. A large blank space will be noted, which, on the ordnance map contains the works of a limited liability company. The way courts are exaggerated are shown in two cases, and a small blind-end street is also indicated in the same way.

For our purpose the 27-inch ordnance survey is the best to use for

People Act added so many new voters to the lists, that polling districts are now too big for effective working, in some cases as many as 3,000 to 4,000 voters having to register at the same polling place.

This leads to the sub-division of polling districts, and the plan I have adopted has been to divide polling districts into geographical sections, each section containing not more than 200 houses, the register being marked up to correspond.

I have proceeded as follows :—

The 27-inch map has been purchased, costing about 30/- to 40/- for a large borough like Rochdale, and the polling districts marked out on the map. Polling district tracings have then been made, omitting all detail that has no direct connection with the register, and adding in any new property that has been erected since the maps were published. Your Town Hall authorities will probably lend you, for the purpose, the same scale maps of all the new housing estates.

The tracing is then transferred to suitably sized sheets of medium white cardboard (one that will roll up preferred), and your section boundaries are marked off in blue lead, or if you prefer, and have the time, washed in in water-colours.

Tracings are then made of each section, and transferred to smaller cards (uniform in size). For this purpose, linen-backed cards are preferable, and different colours for the various wards. At this stage courts and alleys, which are barely distinguishable on the map, should be enlarged, if possible, to ensure quick recognition.

The polling district tracings are rolled up, and put away for future use, and the smaller tracings filed flat in alphabetical and numerical order.

Street and other names, to correspond with the register, are then added, and the maps are ready for use. The complete polling district maps should be pinned up in a prominent position in every committee-room at election times. The smaller section maps will be useful at many other times also.

The next step is to mark up a copy of the register, by writing under the street name, the section number, and where a street or road appears in more than one section, drawing a line across and re-writing the name of the street and adding the section number. Polling districts are usually lettered A, B, C, D, E., etc.; sections should, therefore, be numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, etc., and referred to as W3, B2, and so on. A later step, the preparation of canvass cards, will again be lettered, making canvass cards W3A, B2D, and so on. In every case of lettering or numbering, a X should be placed at the end, showing that, for instance, W3EX is the final of five cards in that section.

Note—This X (meaning final) is of great use in many ways, as, for instance,

in writing up envelopes, the last number of every polling district should be marked 1839X.

Each section map should bear the following information :—the number of houses, and the number of voters in the section—these figures are obtained by counting from the marked register.

The main uses are :—

1.—Distribution by voluntary workers.

Literature for distribution is sent out with the section map, and the quantity to cover every house in the area, is obtained from the map. It is generally found advisable to instruct distributors to distribute right round their section, and then work the inside streets. By this means, strangers can do the work as quickly as others, and the danger of overlapping is reduced to a minimum, with the resultant economy in material and time, and the assurance of a high degree of accuracy.

2.—Registration.

An endeavour should be made to obtain some individual worker, called a section agent, to undertake the duty of keeping headquarters advised of

(Continued on page 19).

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SELECTING A CANDIDATE

THE RIGHT PROCEDURE AND SOME ADVICE THEREON.

(Continued).

During the period between the preliminary conference and the selection meeting it must be remembered that the field is open for anyone to seek to find a candidate. Individuals have rights in this respect as well as organisations, and any individual is at perfect liberty to approach some likely person, provided he makes the position clear that he desires to place his name before his organisation. It is at this stage that precipitancy sometimes leads to a wrong announcement. No person having invited any other person in this unofficial or conditional manner has a right to make a newspaper announcement, yet we have recently seen newspaper announcements of an invitation to a constituency when, in fact, no such invitation had been conveyed, and only a very preliminary request to allow the name to go forward had been sent. Requests to contest a constituency, properly vouched with the full authority of a Divisional Party, are somewhat rare, and a distinction should be drawn between such invitations as these, and preliminary requests to allow a name to go forward.

In the vast majority of cases, in spite of all the opportunity offered, it falls back upon the Executive of the Divisional Party to make a move in order to get a nomination to put before their General Committee. It is well for the Executive to realise this in the early part of the procedure and get busy in a quiet way. It may either act by fostering action amongst its affiliated organisations, or it may approach individuals itself. If suitable nominations are likely to be forthcoming it is not generally advisable for the Executive to add complications by nominating candidates on its own. The E.C. must remember that their action should be the reflection of the will of the whole general body, and an invitation sent out by them to allow a name to come forward would generally be taken by the individual concerned as conveying a general desire that he or she should contest the seat. It would be a distinct injustice to any invited individual if the Executive had invited

him to go forward and the Executive's nomination was turned down. In my opinion, therefore, Divisional Executives are best advised to take action by *first of all* tendering help and advice to branches whose Unions possess candidates, or by offering suggestions to other organisations, only nominating on its own initiative if satisfied that the course is clear, or under a strong feeling that such course is justified in the interests of the Party.

As to how the names of suitable nominees are obtained we have indicated that some Unions have panels of candidates. The names of such persons, together with those of other individuals ready to contest constituencies, are issued from time to time by the Labour Party headquarters, and application should be made for this list and any observations concerning persons whose names appear on it.

When the closing date for nominations has finally arrived, it is advisable that the Executive should meet to consider same, and to settle the detailed procedure of the selection meeting. In regard to the latter term it should be noted that there is now no such thing as a "selection conference" of the kind laid down by Party conferences prior to the issue of the Labour Party new constitution. Unaffiliated organisations must *not* be invited to send delegates, and the selection meeting is no more than a specially summoned meeting of the General Committee. It should not be constituted on some special basis of representation arrived at for that meeting only.

Where one nomination only has been forthcoming the Executive are generally able to sense the acceptability of same and the proceedings at the general meeting are much simplified. It should be possible to arrange for the nominee's presence and for him to give a speech and answer questions, and it is generally an acceptable thing to arrange for a function to follow the meeting—much

*Do all your Local Party
officers get the
Labour Organiser?
If not, why?*

preferably a social function. On this point one must remember that a public announcement of the Labour candidate ought not to be made until the Executive of the Labour Party have given their assent, and it is difficult to observe this reticence where a public demonstration follows a selection meeting.

The proceedings at a selection meeting are much altered where two or three nominations have been received, but fortunately this happens usually only in those constituencies where a well-established Party has been long in being and is well competent to deal with the situation. The appearance of a number of prominent men in competition at a selection conference is not always an edifying spectacle, and not every candidate is able to do justice to himself even if the conference itself is able to make a politic selection. Where there is more than one candidate, tellers should be appointed and ballot papers prepared. It is not advisable to fix any after function.

Good chairmanship is essential at a contested selection, and freedom should not be permitted to delegates to ask irrelevant questions or unnecessary ones. Delegates should have come prepared to make their selection after hearing the nominees. The delegate invariably appears who says that he cannot vote without consulting "his organisation." Well "his organisation" should not have sent a delegate unable to come to a decision at such a time, and it cannot be said that they would be in any better position to cast a vote for or against the nominees seeing that the organisation as a whole had not had the privilege, as the delegate had, of hearing the speeches. Other delegates sometimes want a postponement on this or that ground, but generally there is an axe to grind and the edge of it can be seen. An adjournment should not be given except on a very defensible ground. Such adjournment may possibly mean placing the most popular nominee, or one of them, in a difficult position in relation to some other constituency before which he may appear. Occasionally this is the object of the resolution. When the vote is taken the chairman will generally be able to get a unanimous decision regarding the candidate having the highest number of votes, though a second ballot is advisable if the first

voting is inconclusive. The final procedure is to send the name of the selected person to the Labour Party for endorsement.

A question is sometimes raised as to whether the financial proposals of the different candidates should be laid before a selection meeting, and it is urged that to say that one candidate can contribute a certain amount and another a lesser amount is to give a bias in favour of one nominee on an altogether improper ground. Regarding this point we do not believe that Labour delegates cannot be trusted to come to a decision on this point without unduly weighing the power of gold. Even if some ill-balanced individuals were inclined this way it does not affect the main point: that the financial commitments which the meeting may be incurring should be properly explained and discussed. In 99 cases out of 100 the selection of a candidate, even if put forward by a Union involves some financial liability on the Divisional Party, and to discover these liabilities for the first time after the selection is only to invite trouble and dissatisfaction.

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GOOD OLD LONDON

THE WONDERFUL PROGRESS OF THE METROPOLITAN LABOUR MOVEMENT

By HERBERT MORRISON, M.P., L.C.C.,
Secretary to the London Labour Party.

No part of the country provided more striking electoral results than did the area covered by the operations of the London Labour Party, that is to say, the County of London.

It was only a few years ago that the Labour Movement of the Metropolis was held with contempt, not merely by its political opponents, but even more so by its colleagues associated with vigorous constituencies in the great provincial cities.

London Labour, at the outbreak of the War, had few public representatives. It was afflicted with sections and cranks to a greater extent than any other part of the country, and if any new and half-baked "cult" lighted upon this vale of tears, London was sure to get a severe dose of it.

In 1914 the London Labour Party was born. It made preparations during the war and has been increasingly active in the work of making policy and stimulating local organisation ever since, to an ever-widening extent. Let me hasten to add, however, that this is by no means the sole explanation of London Labour's progress.

In 1918 the new constitution and model rules of the Labour Party were adopted nationally. Constituency Labour Parties were formed. Whereas London Labour and Socialism had formerly interested themselves primarily in revolutionising the universe, they began to appreciate that one of the first and most essential steps in the direction of that rather vague achievement was the establishment of Ward Committees.

The constituency Labour Parties, since 1918, have made enormous strides. Our rank and file are becoming politicians and electioneers in the best sense of these terms. It was the quiet silent work of our individual members in the constituencies, co-operating with the London Labour Party and the Head Office of the Labour Party that led to the extraordinary progress that has been made. One very welcome factor in the achievements of the Movement in London has been the steadily increasing number of full-time Agents at work in

the constituencies, and this has materially contributed to the improved organisation.

From having only 46 members on the Metropolitan Borough Councils out of a total of 1,362, we now have about 300 Borough Councillors and Aldermen, and majorities in six Metropolitan Boroughs. From being practically nothing on the London County Council we now have a Party of 20, whilst our Parliamentary representation has grown from two before the war to 22 as a result of the last General Election.

The following table shows the remarkable progress of London Labour at the last three Parliamentary General Elections :—

		Votes.		Labour M.P.'s.
1918	..	148,000	..	2
1922	..	334,000	..	9
1923	..	425,000	..	22

It is of interest to note that the total London vote of the great Tory Party was 433,000 at the last election, which is only 8,000 in excess of the Labour Party vote, although it is quite possible that the Tory vote was kept down owing to the state of the Party, and that it may rise at the next election.

There are still however, seats which ought to be won. With reasonable organisation and luck we ought to win half London's Parliamentary seats, and if we really go thoroughly into the difficult but by no means insoluble problem of securing the support of what are generally known as the middle classes, Labour can ultimately win forty or even more of the sixty-three London seats.

The problem of the middle classes is principally the question of specialised propaganda, and is nothing to do with any variation of Party principles. We have to explain our principles to the middle classes in their language rather than ours, and from the point of view of their particular social and economic circumstances.

We can, however, claim that, having regard to the special difficulties of the Metropolis with its big commercial population, with the concentrated power (for what it is worth) of the trustified Press, the rank and file of the Movement in London have done their part in the establishment of Britain's first Labour Government.

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THE W.T.A. is prepared to organise an English Party to leave London for this School on Saturday, July 19. Members must be mainly interested in the Labour Movement.

All arrangements for the School are in the hands of the I.F.T.U. and a detailed programme will be ready shortly.

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It is now the duty of all of us to make careful preparations not only for the next Parliamentary General Election, which will quite probably be a stiffer proposition than the last, but also for the next London County Council and Borough Council elections, which will be held respectively in March and November next year.

Our L.C.C. Labour Candidates should at once be selected in all constituencies. Adequate preparations in respect both of organisation and finance must be made, the same being true, in due course, of the Borough Council elections. We have often said that it is no use making Parliament pass good laws to be administered locally if we have bad Councils to administer them, and this is still true. The Labour Government can do much, although this Government will be limited by the fact that it is a minority of the House of Commons, but even a Labour Government with a majority in the House could not adequately fulfil its duties if it was obstructed by reactionary municipalities.

The recent electoral victories, therefore, do not mean that we can rest on our laurels. They have brought to London Labour greater responsibilities, and that means for us all harder work and harder thinking.

I appeal to Labour supporters to assist their local Labour Parties and the London Labour Party in the great task of holding what we have and achieving even greater victories for the people's cause.

(We are indebted to Mr. Morrison for permission to reproduce the above article from "The Pioneer" (Woolwich).)



IS YOUR AGENT A MEMBER of the National Association of Labour Registration and Election Agents?

*(Acts as the Trade Union
for Labour Organisers)*



General Secretary: H. DRINKWATER,
Whittington, near Worcester.

LONDON LABOUR AGENTS' ANNUAL DINNER.

The fourth anniversary dinner of the London and Near Counties' District of the National Association of Labour Registration and Election Agents took place at the Chantecler Restaurant, Soho, on the 26th April, under the presidency of Mr. Harold Croft, supported by the Rt. Hon. Arthur Henderson, M.P., the Rt. Hon. C. W. Bowerman, M.P., and Mr. Egerton Wake, National Agent, as special guests. The General Secretary of the Association (Mr. H. Drinkwater) was unavoidably absent. A number of Labour M.P.s and candidates also attended. Letters of regret were read from the Prime Minister, Miss Ishbel A. MacDonald, Mr. Clynes, M.P., Mr. F. O. Roberts, M.P., Miss Margaret Bondfield, M.P., Miss Susan Laurence, M.P., Mr. W. S. Clure, M.P., Mr. T. E. Naylor, M.P., and Mr. Somerville Hastings, M.P.

Mr. Croft, on rising to propose the toast of "The First British Labour Government" received a cordial reception, congratulatory on his recent appointment as district organiser. In proposing the toast and associating with it the name of the Home Secretary, he declared that the coming into office of the Labour Party was no accident but an indication that the work of organising the forces of Labour during the past thirty years was now bearing its natural fruit.

Mr. Arthur Henderson was received with cheers. He mentioned some difficulties of being in office but not in full power, but emphasised the fact that an enormous amount of work was being done in various departments and ministries. Had such a record of useful administrative action fallen to the lot of a Unionist or Liberal Government the entire press of the country during this Easter recess would have been pouring out paeans of praise not only by the column but by the page, and from the housetops the items would have been heralded in such a way as to direct the attention of the whole nation to such achievements.

A great Liberal statesman once pleaded that his actions and measures had to be ordered with care in view of the power of the House of Lords. But said Mr. Henderson, we of the first British Labour Government have not

only to remember the power of the Lords but that in the present House of Commons. Notwithstanding this drawback great changes were taking place, and whenever the appeal to the people had next to be made, there was every indication that a Labour Government would be returned to real power. One thing had already been proved and that was that not only was Labour found to be able to govern, but able in spite of many difficulties to so govern as to restore confidence and hope not only to the people of this country but to the peoples of the entire world.

The Member for West Islington, Alderman F. Montague, M.P., proposed the toast of "The Association" and related his experiences when quite a young man, as an assistant election agent (unpaid) in South Hackney, prior to that constituency knowing either its former or present Member.

Mr. Egerton Wake, in responding in a vigorous speech gave some of his early experiences as an agent of the Labour Party. He declared that the organisation of the movement was, thanks to the increasing efficiency of the

local staffs, going ahead with irresistible force to a certain success.

"The Special Guests and Visitors" was proposed by Mr. R. T. Windle. He related with Gilbertian humour his experiences at the recent Westminster bye-election.

The Rt. Hon. C. W. Bowerman, M.P., who replied said he had no fear as to the result of the next General Election. Public opinion was rapidly coming round, not only to regard the present Labour Government with favour, but the future return of either a Liberal or a Tory Government with misgivings.

Mr. W. S. Rainbird, chairman-elect of the London district proposed "The Ladies," and Miss Grace Taverner replied.

Excellent items were rendered during the evening by Miss Elsie Ruderman, Mr. C. J. L. Sorensen, and Mr. J. O'Brien; accompanist Miss Marjorie Tester, all of whom were associated with the East Islington Labour Party.

The general arrangements were in the hands of the District Secretary, Alderman Richard Montford, J.P., and were admirably ordered to the entire satisfaction of all.

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COUNTING THE VOTES.

The following interesting extract is from an out-of-print report of a lecture given by Ellis T. Powell at the London School of Economics, and republished by Messrs. P. S. King & Son, Ltd., as "Practical Notes on the Management of Elections." The advice given is reliable and informative.

"Before the day of the poll it will be necessary for you to decide upon your list of scrutineers to attend the counting of the votes. The returning officer will give notice to the election agent of the time and place where he intends to count the votes. At the same time he will tell you how many scrutineers he proposes to admit on behalf of each candidate, and he will probably remind you that each of these scrutineers, before he can be admitted to the counting room, must have made a declaration of secrecy before a Justice of the Peace. The candidate and the election agent are entitled to be present as a matter of right; the rest by favour of the returning officer. As a rule you will select a few of the most active and influential supporters of your candidate to attend him at the final scene. The chairman of the former association (dissolved on the eve of the contest) will doubtless be one, the chief registration agent another. They ought to be wide-awake people, for the result, in a close fight, may conceivably depend upon their seeing that all doubtful ballots are weeded out. They should be people with steady heads, who will not allow their feelings, whether of gratification or dissatisfaction, to disturb the orderly procedure of the counting room, where the returning officer is absolute master of the situation. It is better to keep your candidate's wife out of this function unless you are absolutely certain of her steady nerve and power of self-control.

Taken altogether, in fact, this function is the most trying of all, unless it is the delivery of judgment on an election petition. The procedure has local variations, but in the main it always takes this form. The sealed ballot boxes stand in full view on a table. Around that table are other tables, forming an enclosed space. Inside this are the returning officer and the official counters, who actually handle and count the ballot papers. Outside it, on the other side of the tables, are the candidates, their agents, and their

scrutineers, who simply observe and supervise the counting but do not touch the ballot papers. When all is ready for the count to begin, the seals of some boxes are cut and the papers tumbled out on the tables, the boxes being exhibited empty to the scrutineers. It is usual at this stage to check the papers by simply counting their number so as to ascertain that all the issued papers are there. Thus, if the returning officer reports that he issued 390 papers, there should be 390 in the box. If there are one or two less, the fact is probably a result of the action of that class of voter who takes his ballot paper away as a souvenir of the proceedings and yet remains under the impression that he voted. If there are more papers in the box than the presiding officer issued, there may be (as, in fact, there were at a fairly recent election) forged ballot papers. But that is not a very likely contingency, and we need not pause to consider it.

"Several boxes will, no doubt, be in process of checking at the same time. As soon as the checking is complete, the papers will be mixed in accordance with the statute, and the actual sorting will then be commenced. While the checking is going on, however, the election agent and his scrutineers will have an opportunity of forming a general opinion whether the voting at the various stations, as shown by the ballot papers, tallies with their ideas of the Party strength or weakness in the respective districts. You have here an infallible test, infinitely superior to the most careful and elaborate canvass in the world. The truth comes out at last, sometimes as a rather unwelcome revelation that what you imagined to be one of your strongholds is really dead against you. Sometimes the revelation is quite the other way. At a certain polling station I was once told by a locally eminent authority that there would not be 20 voters for a certain candidate. In the result there were at least 200. You have a perfect right to obtain this information as to the political colouring of the various wards or districts. If the opportunity comes do not neglect to take it.

"The exact process adopted in the count will depend upon the conditions of the contest. If there are only two candidates for a single seat, the counting is simply a sorting of the respective votes into separate heaps. If you have

five candidates for two seats there will be many varieties of cross voting, and in such instances there is sometimes no attempt to sort the ballots, but the votes are credited on counting sheets. Whatever the process, it is the business of your scrutineers to watch it closely, so that there is no miscredit or mis-sorting and so that doubtful votes are put aside for adjudication by the returning officer. In a very close fight the result may depend upon this vigilance, and if you subsequently have reason to believe that the declared figures were wrong you can only have a recount by lodging a petition and depositing £1,000. As the sorting proceeds, it is usual for the respective papers to be counted in bundles of fifty or a hundred. These bundles are in turn arranged in separate piles. It is very desirable that the election agents should personally check these bundles. There have been cases where, by inadvertence (and rarely, perhaps, by design) three or four votes for Smith have been at the top of the bundle while all the rest of its contents were ballots for Jones. To guard against that eventuality, an election agent should request permission for himself and the other agents to go inside the ring and personally check the bundles.

"Before the result is declared the returning officer will adjudicate upon the disputed ballot papers. This adjudication, again, may affect the result, and hence the election agents should watch it closely and if necessary make notes of cases where they are dissatisfied with the returning officer's decisions. Precisely similar defects on ballots for opposing candidates can generally be settled by pairing.

(Continued from page 11).

removals and new-comers, and visiting and distribution. Polling district agents and ward agents, should accept responsibility for arranging this work, under the borough agent.

3.—Canvass.

Sections being small (not more than 200 houses) are rarely more than five minutes' walk from end to end. Canvass cards may thus be arranged, so that the canvasser has a choice of streets, instead of one long road, and people missed at the first call, are never far away for a second visit.

(Another instructive article by the same writer appears next month.)

WAS THIS A LIBEL ?

AN AMAZING LIBEL DECISION.

We print below a leaflet issued in a certain constituency during the late General Election. We believe that most of our readers will incline to the opinion that never was a more simple and innocuous document ever issued. It has plenty of hit in it nevertheless, but the presentation, almost without comment, of facts (which we believe were admitted) would strike most people as erring on the cautious side rather than as being, as it turns out to be, a libellous leaflet, landing the candidate and agent in costs to the tune of over £100, as the alternative to a costly libel action and conceivably heavy damages.

The leaflet was issued during the late election by a Labour Agent, and action was commenced by the successful Tory candidate solely as it would appear to us, because of the four words, "He has betrayed you." Friendly legal opinion was sought, and as a result an apology was made and costs accepted, legal advice being to the effect that the leaflet was libellous in law, and that heavy damages might be secured. We think our readers will agree with us in sincerely hoping that the law is not actually as silly as the legal advice given would suggest. If it is, then it is high time the law of libel was put more in consonance with commonsense and modern election practice. We doubt very much whether any English jury could be found to declare the leaflet quoted to be libellous, or such as to justify damages. It strikes us as we believe it will strike most commonsense men, that the four words referred to were fair comment on the facts disclosed. Electioneers are used to harder hitting than this, and if the statement referred to is libellous, what must be said of the outrageous charges levelled again and again against Labour people by their opponents—charges of the foulest description which the Tory Party pay men to circulate at every street corner during an election; or charges which His Grace the Duke of Atholl has the impudence to echo recently in the House of Lords? We think it a great pity that owing to lack of finance the candidate and agent referred to above, were not able to put the legal advice quoted, to the test. We believe

that both were willing even to go further in defence of their position, but they were compelled to acquiesce in view of other interests. Certainly some protection will have to be found for candidates and agents, for decisions like this ought not to be accepted. Means must be found to test them.

RECORD

One Year of Muddle and Make Belief in the House of Commons

In his Election Address, November, 1922, — said :—

"I have done my level best by speech and vote to get the Administration of the Old Age Pension Acts altered so as to do away with the present unfair system which puts a penalty upon thrift."

OLD AGE PENSIONERS, REMEMBER.

February 21st.—The Labour Party fought for Old Age Pensioners and NO Penalty on thrift.

— DID NOT VOTE.

February 22nd.— — — VOTED FOR INCREASE OF RENTS.

March 6th.—The Labour Party fought for Pensions for Widows with Children.

— — VOTED AGAINST IT.

AGRICULTURAL WORKERS, REMEMBER.

March 7th.—The Labour Party fought for a National Minimum Wage.

— — VOTED AGAINST IT.

UNEMPLOYED, REMEMBER.

March 19th.—The Labour Party fought to reduce the waiting period of Unemployment Benefit from Six to Three Days.

— — VOTED AGAINST IT.

FARMERS, REMEMBER.

April 19th.—The Labour Party fought for Attention to the Need for Better Administration for Agriculture.

— — VOTED AGAINST IT.

HOUSE WIVES, REMEMBER.

June 11th.—The Labour Party fought to do away with the tax of 8d. per lb. on Tea.

June 12th.—Also to abolish the tax of 2½d. per lb. on Sugar.

— — VOTED AGAINST BOTH.

June 11th.— — VOTED AGAINST

the reduction of 1d. per pint tax on beer.

June 19th.—The Labour Party fought to reduce the rate of Income Tax on lower taxable incomes.

— — VOTED AGAINST IT.

HOUSE SEEKERS, REMEMBER.

June 20th.—The Labour Party fought to give powers to Local Authorities to hire empty houses for the housing of Working Classes.

— — VOTED AGAINST IT.

WAR WIDOWS, REMEMBER.

July 2nd.—The Labour Party fought to exempt War Widows' Pensions from Income Tax.

— — VOTED AGAINST IT.

WORKERS, REMEMBER!!!

Your Votes gave — — his seat in Parliament in November, 1922. HE HAS BETRAYED YOU.

VOTE FOR — —
A TRUSTED WORKER FOR THE WORKERS.

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